



COMPETITIVE
RESOURCES

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HB 6544- An Act Concerning Energy Efficiency

Energy & Technology Committee

Public Hearing

March 8, 2011

Good Afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello and Members of the Energy and Technology Committee.

My name is Doug Cahill and I'm one of the principals of Competitive Resources, Incorporated (CRI), a residential energy service company in Yalesville, Connecticut. My partners and I have been providing energy efficiency services to the electric and gas utility companies in Connecticut for over twenty (20) years. We are currently one of a group of approximately twenty five (25) vendors delivering in home services for the Homes Energy Solutions Program (HES). We are also active members of the Northeast Energy Efficiency Council – CT Chapter. My purpose today is to offer my thoughts on the provision of Bill #6544 related to a proposed requirement to have homes evaluated for energy efficiency as part of a real estate sales transaction.

Although it can be argued that such a law could potentially further encumber home sales during these difficult economic times, the advantages of such a requirement should not be overlooked. Knowing the potential "operating costs" of a home would offer consumers and lenders an additional tool to evaluate the buyer's ability to manage their finances prior to closing the deal. Just as many individuals look at the miles per gallon an automobile gets as part of their purchasing options, homeowners could do the same.

Folks in our line of business have demonstrated time and time again that two homes that are very similar in size and style can have radically different electricity and/or fossil fuel consumption because one of them has more insulation, fewer air leaks, and more efficient lighting and appliances. The average consumer however, may not be taking this into account as they make their choice as to which house is best for them. Imagine if their final decision were based on the color scheme of the inefficient home rather than what the place will cost to heat.

The HES Program, sponsored by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund and administered by the utility companies here in Connecticut, has clearly demonstrated that there are plenty of opportunities to improve the efficiency of homes in the State. It has also been a catalyst for creating "green jobs" in the residential sector. I'm not privy to the exact numbers but I would guess there are at least one hundred (100) technicians who have received the Building Performance Institute (BPI) Certification in a variety of categories and, at least that many working on getting such certifications.



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As I see it, the proposed bill would have the following advantages:

- It would offer consumers comparative information they need to make a smart choice in the home selection;
- It would encourage sellers to make certain their home was as efficient (or more efficient) than comparable models on the market;
- It could leverage the current HES funding to help sellers identify and address energy problems in their home before it goes on the market;
- As HES moves toward a free market approach as it is intended to do, the existing certified workforce would have an established niche where they could continue to provide their valuable and cost effective services;
- Banks and lending institutions would be more inclined to develop low (or lower) interest financing packages related to energy efficiency improvements; and
- The State would benefit from reduced energy demand and cleaner air quality.

I recognize that a specific tool would have to be adopted or developed to ensure consistency of the home evaluations. In addition, the response time to requests for energy auditing services would be crucial to not slowing down the sales process. Given the number of tools developed by the federal and state governments and utility companies, as well as the great strides in the development of an energy efficiency infrastructure that have been accomplished here in Connecticut, I believe the challenges this legislation may present are not insurmountable.

Thank you.